

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 510
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0810

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT REF OMITTED REF TEL AVIV 0942)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, JO, IS
SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM CONSULTATIONS -- US TECHNICAL TEAM VISIT

REF: TEL AVIV 0942

SUMMARY: WE HAVE REVIEWED CONTENTS REFTEL WITH TAUBENBLATT
AND ROMIG AND HVE ASSESSED NEXT STEPS WITH RESPECT RESOLU-
TION ISSUES BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL ON MAQARIN DAM/
YARMOUK RIVER PROJECT IN LIGHT FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN
VOICED BY GOI DURING JERUSALEM MEETING WITH US TECHNICAL
TEAM. WHILE FIRM GOI POSITION ON FIVE POINTS NOT CLEAR
THIS TIME, WE STRONGLY FEEL THAT IT IS DESIRABLE TO PRESS
AHEAD WITH US GOOD OFFICES ROLE, TRANSMITTING TO GOJ
AREAS OF GOI CONCERN SET FORTH PARA 4 REFTEL AND KEEPING
MOMENTUM AND PRESSURE ON BOTH PARTIES TO RESOLVE
DIFFERENCE ON FAIR AND EQUITABLE BASIS. WE ALSO SEE
US ROLE IN CLARIFYING TO BOTH SIDES DIFFERENCES ON
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PARTICULAR ISSUES, AT THE SAME TIME, SUGGESTING
ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, E.G. AMOUNT OF
WATER FOR THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE AND FLOW DURING SUMMER
MONTHS.

AS IMMEDIATE NEXT STEP, WE WOULD LIKE TO TRANS-
MIT TO GOJ FIVE CONCERNS RAISED BY GOI AND SEEK GOJ

INITIAL REACTION. WE WILL SUGGEST THAT GOJ REVIEW THESE AREAS OF CONCERN BEFORE CONVEYING RESPONSE TO GOI. BY EARLY MARCH 1977, WHEN HARZA'S DRAFT FINAL REPORT AVAILABLE, US WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD BRIDGE DIFFERENCES OF BOTH SIDES. THEREFORE AGAINST ABOVE BACKGROUND, REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE TO TRANSMIT GOI CONCERNS TO GOJ. NEED IMMEDIATE RESPONSE SINCE WE PLAN DISCUSS WITH GOJ ON FEBRUARY 12 PRIOR TAUBENBLATT/ROMIG DEPARTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. TAUBENBLATT AND ROMIG ARRIVED ON FEBRUARY 9 AND WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS US TECHNICAL TEAM MEETINGS IN JERUSALEM WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN EXPRESSED BY GOI. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY'S REACTIONS TO GOI CONCERNS AND HOW WE MAY BEST DEAL WITH THEM.

(A) EQUITABLE SHARE OF YARMOUK RIVER WATER -- THIS CONCERN RELATES PRIMARILY TO WATER FOR YARMOUK TRIANGLE. THERE IS NEED TO BRIDGE 17 MCMS FIGURE USED IN HARZA INTERIM REPORT, WITH 40 MCMS WHICH GOI CLAIMS IS CORRECT LEVEL OF UTILIZATION BY VILLAGES IN THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE. WE SEE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS, SHCH AS PROVIDING FOR HIGHER DAM IN FORTHCOMING STAGE (II), WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FULL 40 MCMS TO ISRAEL. US COULD CONSIDER BEARING THE INCREMENTAL COSTS IN THE HIGHER DAM. OR COULD SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE WHEREBY
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ISRAEL OBTAINS 25 MCMS FROM THE YARMOUK RIVER FOR THE TRIANGLE ON A PRIOR RIGHT BASIS (THE JOHNSTON PLAN FUGURE) WITH ADDITIONAL 15 MCMS TO BE CAPTURED AS FLOOD WATERS AND PUMPED INTO LAKE TIBERIAS. THIS APPROACH (FOR 15 MCMS) SIMILAR TO PRESENT GOI NAHARAYIM RESERVOIR/BEIT SHEAN-KENERET PIPELINE SCHEME. WE WILL BE ABLE TO BETTER ASSESS THESE, AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS WHEN HARZA FINAL DRAFT REPORT AVAILABLE.

(B) FLOW AND QUALITY OF YARMOUK RIVER WATER -- THE ISRAELIS ARE CLEARLY INTERESTED IN MAXIMUM FLOW DURING THE LOW SUMMER MONTHS. AT THE 2.3 CUBIC METERS PER SECOND (CMS), ISRAEL WOULD USE ABOUT 25 MCMS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. THE FLOW OF YARMOUK RIVER WATER WILL DEPEND ON SUCH FACTORS AS WHETHER ISRAEL STORES SOME OF THE YARMOUK FLOWS IN LAKE TIBERIAS, THE HEIGHT OF THE MAQARIN DAM AND ACTIVE STORAGE CAPACITY, SYRIAN USES ABOVE MAQARIN, WHETHER

A SECOND RESERVOIR IS TO BE CONSTRUCTED BELOW MAQARIN AND THE TYPE OF DIVERSION SCHEME, E.G., DAM, DROP INLET, ETC. THE QUALITY OF YARMOUK RIVER WATER WILL DEPEND WHETHER ISRAEL STORES SUCH WATER IN THE CONSIDERABLY MORE SALINE TIBERIAS AND HOW AND WHEN SUCH WATER IS RELEASED. FURTHERMORE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAQARIN DAM WOULD REDUCE FLOODWATERS INTO THE LOWER JORDAN, WHICH COULD IMPACT ON QUALITY OF YARMOUK (LOWER JORDAN RIVER) WATER TO THE EXTENT SUCH WATER IS USED. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE FACTORS CAN BEST BE ASSESSED WHEN THE HARZA FINAL DRAFT IS FORTHCOMING AND THE VARIOUS OPTIONS ASSESSED.

(C) ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS --
IN VIEW OF AID'S REQUIREMENTS IN ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS, IT IS NECESSARY THAT THE IMPLICATIONS BE
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IMPACTS OF THE MAQARIN DAM ON THE LOWER JORDAN RIVER AND ON THE DEAD SEA BE ADDRESSED ASAP. WE DO NOT SEE THAT THESE ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE SO SUBSTANTIAL AS TO HOLD UP THE PROJECT BEFORE

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
EB-04 IGA-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 L-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 OES-02
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SOLUTIONS ARE FOUND, BUT RATHER TO UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS SO THEY CAN BE ADDRESSED IN THE YEARS TO COME. NO DOUBT, HARZA WILL ADDRESS ENVIRONMENT IN ITS FEASIBILITY STUDY. IT IS ALSO NOW MOST TIMELY FOR AID TO ENGAGE THE US GEOLOGICAL SERVICE (USGS) ASAP TO UNDERTAKE A RECONNAISSANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS TO BE ADDRESSED IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEAD SEA. IT WAS AGREED DURING THE NOVEMBER 29 AND 30 MEETINGS ON THE HARZA INTERIM REPORT THAT SUCH A RECONNAISSANCE WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITH AID FINANCING.

(D) INSURING ISRAELIS HYDROELECTRIC RIGHTS -- IT WAS NOT CLEAR FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH GOI HOW THEY PLAN TO USE THIS CONCERN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OTHER MAQARIN DAM ISSUES. WE DOUBT THAT THE ISRAELIS COULD BE SERIOUS ABOUT RESURRECTING THE PALESTINE POWER POOL PROJECT BASED ON YARMOUK WATERS. THE PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPLICATED SINCE THE ISRAELIS CONSIDER THE PALESTINE ELECTRIC CORPORATION CONCESSION CONFIDENTIAL

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ALIVE, ITS SHARES HAVING BEEN PURCHASED FROM THE BRITISH FIRMS, WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AS THE MAJOR SHAREHOLDER. ALTERNATIVELY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE GOJ DID NOT SPECIFICALLY ACCEPT, INTER ALIA THE PALESTINE ELECTRIC CORPORATION CONCESSION WITH THE FORMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF JORDAN. IN VIEW OF THE LEGAL ENTANGLEMENT OF THIS ISSUE, PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FROM ISRAEL, PROFESSOR BAXTER WAS REQUESTED TO THOROUGHLY ASSESS THIS PROBLEM FOR STATE/AID CLARIFICATION AND WE WILL AWAIT HIS REPORT.

E. THE WEST BANK

WITH REGARD WATER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK, ANY ADDITIONAL AMOUNT OF WATER WHICH MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR MAQARIN STORAGE BY INCREASING HEIGHT OF DAM WOULD RAISE THE ISSUE OF WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCREASED COST ABOVE THE HEIGHT REQUIRED FOR EAST BANK USES. IT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED THAT MAQARIN ALONE WOULD DEVELOP THE RESOURCES OF THE YARMOUK SUFFICIENTLY FOR PROVIDING FULL WATER REQUIREMENTS TO THE WEST BANK. THEREFORE THE TIMING OF CONSTRUCTION AND FINANCING OF ADDITIONAL STORAGE IN THE YARMOUK BELOW WADI RAGGAD (AT WADI KHALID OR MUKHEIBA) WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AT A TIME WHEN THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR

PROVIDING WATER TO THE WEST BANK HAS BEEN MORE
FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AND SELECTION FROM ALTERNATIVE
METHODS OF CONVEYANCE BECOMES MORE PRACTICAL.
(CONVEYENCE VIA JORDAN RIVER CHANNEL IS NOT ONE OF
THE ALTERNATIVES DUE TO SALINITY AND THE NON-AVAILABILITY
OF WATER FROM LAKE TIBERIAS.) NO COMMENT CAN BE
MADE AT THIS TIME AS TO THE SUFFICIENCY OF WATER FROM
THE YARMOUK TO MEET TOTAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE WEST
BANK. THE HARZA STUDY WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL
DETAILS SINCE HARZA IS CONSIDERING THE POTENTIAL
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FOR ULTIMATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WATER OF THE YARMOUK
RIVER OVER AND BEYOND THAT VISUALIZED FOR STAGE II
DEVELOPMENT.

2. ALTHOUGH NEITHER THE GOI OR GOJ POSITIONS ON 1.A-E
(ABOVE) ARE CLEAR AT THIS TIME, WE STRONGLY FEEL THAT
IT IS DESIRABLE TO PRESS AHEAD WITH US GOOD OFFICES
ROLE, TRANSMITTING TO THE GOJ THE AREAS OF GOI
CONCERN SET FORTH PARA 4 REFTTEL AND KEEPING MOMENTUM
AND PRESSURE ON BOTH PARTIES TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES
ON A FAIR AND EQUITABLE BASIS. WE ALSO SEE APPROPRIATE
US ROLE IN CLARIFYING TO BOTH SIDES DIFFERENCES ON
PARTICULAR ISSUES AND AT THE SAME TIME SUGGESTING
ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

3. AS IMMEDIATE NEXT STEP, WE WOULD LIKE TO
TRANSMIT TO GOJ THE FIVE CONCERNS (PARA 4 REFTTEL)
EXPRESSED ORALLY BY GOI AND SEEK GOJ INITIAL REACTION.
WE WILL SUGGEST THAT GOJ REVIEW FIVE AREAS BEFORE
FORWARDING RESPONSE TO GOI THROUGH U.S. WHEN HARZA
FINAL DRAFT REPORT AVAILABLE IN EARLY MARCH 1977,
US WOULD BE IN BETTER POSITION TO ADDRESS ALTERNATIVE
SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD BRIDGE DIFFERENCES THAT REMAIN.

4. THEREFORE AGAINST ABOVE BACKGROUND, REQUEST
DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE TO TRANSMIT GOI CONCERNS
TO GOJ. NEED IMMEDIATE RESPONSE SO WE CAN DISCUSS
WITH GOJ ON FEBRUARY 12 PRIOR TO TAUBENBLATT AND
ROMIG DEPARTURE.
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